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ABSTRACT

The New York State Department of Education contracts with 13 public school districts for the education of children residing on American Indian reservations. In addition to reporting on all students, the 13 districts must now report the following data on Native American students: (1) scores on standardized achievement tests, Regents competency tests and examinations, the SAT, and the ACT; (2) participation in language classes; (3) attendance; (4) promotion, retention, and dropout; and (5) type of high school diploma. A summary of 1991-92 data reveals that 2,690 Native American students were enrolled in prekindergarten through grade 12, including 251 in Individualized Education Programs or other certificate programs and 82 in gifted and talented programs. Among high school students, 56 percent were in the local diploma track and 39 percent were in the Regents-endorsed degree track. Among high school seniors, 42 percent took the SAT, averaging 393 in verbal and 438 in math, and 18 percent took the ACT, averaging about 21 in all subjects. Attendance rates of Native American students were as good or slightly better than those of all students. Only 31 percent were enrolled in a Native language, and 10 percent were enrolled in another language. In high school, 84 percent were promoted, 8 percent were retained, and 8 percent dropped out; 61 percent of all Native American dropouts were concentrated in two districts. Bar charts compare test scores for Native students, non-Native students, and all students statewide; present attendance rates by grade; and summarize employment of Native American teachers and other school personnel. (SV)

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American Indian Education Research In New York State: A Team Approach

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History

Schooling of Native Americans in New York State

The role of the State in the education of Indians has been to enable American Indians to have access to schooling through public education.

Since 1846, the education of Indians has evolved and developed within New York State. Article 83 and Section 111 of New York State Education Law define the State's responsibilities and duties of the Commissioner of Education in the provision of educational services for Indian children residing on reservations in New York State. These laws give the State Education Department the responsibility to implement laws pertaining to the education of children on reservations, provide for compulsory attendance, and give the Commissioner of Education the responsibility for the general supervision of such education in State schools or in school districts with which the State contracts for such education, to pay for such education, to take an annual enumeration of Indian inhabitants on the reservations, and to provide funds for attendance at postsecondary institutions by American Indian students. State Aid is paid to 13 public school districts, as a substitute for local levy as a result of the tax exempt status of Indian lands, for the education of Native American children in grades pre-kindergarten through 12.

Contracts with Public School Districts

The State Education Department presently contracts with 13 school districts for the education of children residing on Indian reservations. These contracts are of three types: (1) to provide for education at a reservation school; (2) to pay for tuition for schooling provided at a district school not on the reservation; and (3) to pay for transportation of reservation children to reservation schools and district schools. In addition, three of these school districts have subcontracted with another school district for the education of some of the Indian children, generally in response to a request by parents for the transfer. The following table shows the school districts, the reservations they serve and the type of contract between the State Education Department and the school districts.

State Education Department Contracts With Public School Districts for the Education of Indian Children From Reservations		
Reservation	**School District(s)**	**Type of Contract**
Allegany	Salamanca City School	Transportation Tuition
Cattaraugus	Gowanda Central School (subcontract with Lake Shore) Silver Creek (subcontract with Lake Shore)	Tuition Transportation (private contractor) Tuition Transportation
Oneida Territory	Stockbridge Valley	Tuition Transportation
Onondaga	LaFayette Central School (subcontract with Onondaga Central School)	Reservation School Tuition Transportation
Poospatuck	Center Moriches Union Free School	Tuition Transportation (private)
St. Regis Mohawk	Salmon River Central School Massena Central School	Reservation School Tuition Transportation Tuition Transportation
Shinnecock	Southampton Union Free School	Tuition Transportation (private)
Tonawanda	Akron Central School	Tuition Transportation
Tuscarora	Niagara-Wheatfield Central School	Reservation School Tuition Transportation (private)

Background and Need

The New York State Education Department collects school based data on ethnicity, but the Department does not collect individual student data according to ethnicity. Therefore, in New York State there is no individual data available on statewide Native American student achievement or dropout rates. The data that is reported is school district-wide data which reveals how all children perform in these schools. Yet decision makers at the State, local and tribal levels need this type of information to assist them in making program and fiscal judgments and to assure the public of the accountability of public education with regard to the education of Indian children.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine Native American student achievement outcomes on school administered State standardized tests, and to examine other contributing factors that are relevant to the educational success of Native American students. A secondary purpose is to report the findings to key people to enable them to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the review of these data to develop support for budgetary and legislative changes needed to meet the needs of Indian children, and finally, to become a repository for these data now, and in the future, for reference and research.

Research Goal and Major Objectives

The overall goal of the research is to develop a survey to gather data that will encourage contracting school districts and Indian tribes, nations, and communities to identify and document the educational and unique needs of American Indian students who attend public schools in grades K-12 in New York State.

The major objectives are the following:

1. To improve and strengthen the lines of communication between the school districts, Indian communities, and the State Education Department by focusing on student outcomes. [1]

2. To cooperatively develop strategies that will assist school administrators, teachers, parents, tribal leaders, and key educators to remedy failure and model success. [1]

Research Design and Scope

The contracts that are negotiated between the State Education Department and the 13 contracting school districts stipulate that the contracting school districts provide the State

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[1] New Compact for Learning - Improving Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Education Results in the 1990's.

Commissioner of Education and the Indian tribes and nations with an annual written report. The Department's Native American Unit staff, with the assistance of a curriculum assessment team member, developed an instrument to collect achievement and other relevant educational information on American Indian students in New York State.

The survey would examine the following items:

1. Results of school administered State standardized tests.
2. Native American student attendance.
3. Identify Native American student tracking.
4. Student participation in Native language and culture course offerings.
5. Affirmative action initiatives in the 13 contracting school districts.

Collecting the Data

The State Education Department asked contracting school district superintendents to work with the Department's Native American Unit to disaggregate existing data and to collect the newly requested data. These school districts worked with the Department to field test the survey instrument for the 1990-91 report.

In the event that school districts were unable to provide all this information for 1990-91, they were requested to report any data that was available, and to plan on reporting this data for the 1991-92 school year and thereafter. Prior to submission of the 1991-92 report, meetings were held with the school personnel that had completed the 1990-91 survey to discuss the problems that surfaced as they worked with the survey. As a result, changes were made in the definitions and some of the charts were clarified to further delineate the type of student information requested.

Designing the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was developed by the State Education Department's staff and was adapted from other surveys used by the Department to collect other educational State and community program data. The findings of these other instruments were also used to demonstrate student profiles and student performance statewide.

Periodically, the Native American Unit staff and the contracting school district superintendents will continue to work together to improve upon the survey instrument.

Source and Type of Student Data Collected

The New York State Education Department requires all school districts in the State to report annually on the educational status of its students. School districts submit to the State Education Department information in areas including, but not limited to: student enrollment, attendance rates, gender and racial/ethnic distributions, and student achievement on tests included in the State testing program. Such tests include:

- Pupil Evaluation Program Tests - The "PEP" test is an annual basic skills testing program required of all pupils in grades 3, 5, and 6. Reading and mathematics tests are administered in grades 3 and 6, and a writing test is administered in grade 5.

- Program Evaluation Tests - The "PET" tests in science and social studies are administered annually to pupils in grades 4, 6, and 8. The science test is administered in grade 4 and the social studies tests are administered in grades 6 and 8.

- Preliminary Competency Tests - The "PCT" in reading and writing are provided for administration in either grade 8 or 9. Their primary purpose is the identification of pupils who need special help in developing the basic skills of reading comprehension and writing. A State reference point has been established for each test, and pupils who score below the State Reference Point must be provided appropriate remedial instruction.

- Regents Competency Tests - These tests assess competence in mathematics, science, U.S. history and government, global studies, reading, and writing. Students must demonstrate competence in these areas in order to receive a local high school diploma.

- Regents Examinations - These exams are achievement tests based on Department-recommended curriculum outlines used in grades 9-12. Such courses include English, social studies, earth science, biology, chemistry, physics, math, foreign languages, and other areas (e.g. Hebrew). The high school Regents Examination Program, started in 1878, is one of the oldest testing programs in the nation.

The Education Department consolidates each district's data into a resource document known as the Comprehensive Assessment Report (CAR). This report is intended to provide an opportunity for each board of education or board of trustees to annually review student

achievement and provides a public record of accountability for educational results in school districts and schools.

Public review and debate about pupil achievement has proven to be one of the most effective ways to develop concern of parents and the public about the status of educational programs in schools. An effective way to obtain the attention and involvement of communities and school boards is to display trend information on pupil progress such as that provided in the Comprehensive Assessment Report.

While the data in the Comprehensive Assessment Report can serve as a useful resource for a discussion of student achievement, those who review a Comprehensive Assessment Report should be aware of its limitations. There are, for example, many intended outcomes of instruction that are not measured by State tests. In addition, the data submitted for use in a Comprehensive Assessment Report is not disaggregated, therefore a person who reviews a Comprehensive Assessment Report would not be able to determine student achievement for a particular group of students. For instance, a person could not determine how well Native American students did in District "X" in a certain test area.

Calculating Statistics

The contracts negotiated between the State Education Department and 13 school districts for the education of Native American students require the districts to report to the State Education Department the educational status and achievements of their Native American students. Therefore, in addition to submitting data for the Comprehensive Assessment Report for their **entire** district, they must also submit similar data on Native American students in their district. Once this is done, the achievement of Native American students can be compared with their peers in the same district and with the other contracting districts. For example, District "X" has 100 students total *including* 25 Native American students. They submit data on all 100 students for the Comprehensive Assessment Report **and** separately submit similar data for the 25 Native American students. The data submitted for the 25 Native students is then extrapolated from the Comprehensive Assessment Report, leaving two groups of students: 75 non-Native students and 25 Native students. The two groups may then be compared.

Those who use the data in a Comprehensive Assessment Report should also be familiar with two basic measurement concepts: validity and reliability. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* [2] indicate that validity "refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores." While validity is usually considered in terms of the inferences made from an individual test score,

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[2] These standards are a joint venture of the American Psychological Association, the American Educational Research Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. The quotation is from the latest version, published in 1985.

the concept may also be applied to inferences made from the test results for a group. Reliability "refers to the degree to which test scores are free from errors of measurement." Although test scores may have an air of mathematical precision about them, none is free from measurement errors This concept is especially important when the scores of an individual are interpreted. With groups, measurement errors tend to cancel each other out, and the larger the group, the more accurate and stable are test results.

Comparing Methods and Rates

When comparing Native students with their peers, the comparisons involve two different groups of students, and the question is whether or not the difference in their test results is larger than the difference that might be found in two samples drawn at random from the same population. If the difference is larger, it is statistically significant. Significant differences are proposed to be measured at the .05 level of significance. The .05 level means that the difference could occur **by chance** only 5 times in 100.

Identifying areas where Native students vary significantly from their peers is the first step toward planning for the improvement of the quality of their educational experience. If a group of students continually performs below their peers in similar subject areas, and this difference in performance is significant, then this should alert teachers, parents, educational leaders, and the community that these areas require additional attention.

Applications of This Research

There are many types and methods of research in progress regarding the education of American Indian students with various corresponding statements of purpose.

The significant factor of this research effort is the direct connectedness with the Indian communities, the contracting school districts, and the State Education Department. The contracting school districts report findings annually to the Department and to the Indian tribes.

The focus is on the Native American students and how they compare academically with all other students in New York State. We will know how many American Indian students are categorized as special education students, gifted and talented students, and in all other educational tracts and settings. We will also identify those school districts that offer programs in Native language and culture and the levels of Native American students participating in these courses. Finally, we will know the affirmative action policies and resulting employment practices in the thirteen contracting districts. The Department, tribes, nations, and school districts will be able to study and determine numbers, trends, patterns

and work together and begin to improve the education of American Indian students in New York State.

Conclusions

The American Indian/Alaskan Native Dropout Study (1991, page 77) states that "a major theme appears to be related to caring and all that it means and implies as a quality or characteristic that must not be assumed....One thing seems to be clear; students recognize it as a factor which influences their decision to stay in school or leave."

Native American students are concerned that people care, that people care enough to be able to identify their educational achievements and performance in school. Native students often mention that they are never listed as a significant group of people, but are categorized as "other."

The task then, as this information is acquired, is to cite success and remedy failure. Indian Nations at Risk: An Educational Strategy for Action, prepared by The U.S. Department of Education, recommends that Indian leaders and educators use research findings to change and/or strengthen State educational policy, legislation, and the educational practices that affect the lives and education of American Indian students. This research responds to that recommendation.

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Summary of Analysis of 1991-92 Native American Student Achievement Data

- Population:

  The **total population reported was** 2,690 Native American students in grades Pre-K through 12.

- Program Type:

  Overall, 251 students **(nine percent)** were enrolled in Individualized Education Programs (IEP) or other certificate programs. However, three districts report a high concentration of IEP students. Eighty-two students **(three percent)** were enrolled in Gifted and Talented programs.

- Degree Type (grades 9 - 12):

  Fifty-six percent of the students reported to be in a **local diploma** degree type. **Thirty-nine percent** are reported to be in a **Regents endorsed** degree type. The remaining **five percent** were reported to be in **certificate, IEP, or other** degree types.

- Graduation Status:

  The numbers reported indicate that **55 percent** of the grade 12 students are being accepted to a 2-year or 4-year college program. It is not known if these students actually end up attending college.

- SAT Results:

  Forty-two percent of high school seniors took the SAT. This is far less than the statewide average of 75 percent. The average scores for these students were 393 Verbal and 438 Math. Less than four percent of those tested scored 550 or above in the Verbal section; 18 students (32 percent) scored 340 or lower. Less than 23 percent of those tested scored 550 or above in the Math section; 14 students (25 percent) scored 340 or lower.

- ACT Results:

  Eighteen percent of grade 12 students took the ACT tests. Some of these students could also have taken the SAT. The **average scores** were very near **21** in all subject areas. Less than 10 percent scored 26 or above in English, Math, or Science. 25 percent of the students scored 26 or above in the Reading subject area.

- Student Attendance:

  Public school attendance data was not yet available for the 1991-92 school year so the 1990-91 data was used for comparison with the 1991-92 data for Native American students. Native American student attendance rates are as good or slightly better for all grade groupings and, for the total of all grades, the attendance rate for Native American students are better than for all public school students (92.5 percent for Native American students, 91.6 percent for all public schools).

- Language Participation:

  Native Langua$_{g}$.: Only 31 percent of all students were enrolled in a Native Language. The numbers enrolled declined as students progressed through the upper grades. There were 85 percent fewer students enrolled in grade 12 than in grade 9. *Overall, 95 percent of those tested passed.* While this is good, it only represents a small percentage of students.

  Other Language (French, Spanish): Only 10 percent of all students were enrolled in other languages. No students below sixth grade were enrolled. The number of students enrolled declined as the grade level increased. There were 53 percent fewer students enrolled in grade 12 than in grade 9. *Overall, 85 percent of those tested passed.*

- Student Status:

  In **grades 6-8**, 93 percent of the students were promoted and six percent were retained. In **grades 9-12**, 84 percent of the students were promoted, eight percent were retained, and the dropout rate was eight percent (54 students). Sixty-one percent of all dropouts (33 students) were concentrated in just two of the larger districts.

- PEP Test Results, PET Test Results, PCT Test Results:

  For an analysis of this data, please see the attached graphs and charts.

- Regents Competency Tests:

  The numbers enrolled are relatively low and vary between 80 and 100 students for most subjects. However, Reading and Writing have very low numbers of students enrolled (41 and 49 respectively). The students who are tested, however, do well, with passing rates between 70 and 100 percent of those tested.

- Regents Course Participation:

  Overall, a small percentage of students in grades 9-12 enroll in Regents Courses. The numbers of students drops off considerably in the Math and Science courses as the course progressed to the next sequence. For example, 75 percent are tested in Math Sequence I, 37.2 percent in Math Sequence II, and only 28.2 percent in Math Sequence III. For Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, the percentages are 47.4, 25, and 12.8 respectively. Although a small percentage is tested, a fairly high percentage pass the test. For example, 93 percent of those tested in the Math III passed, and 90 percent of those tested in Physics passed.

Chart I

Percent of Students Scoring Above The SRP On PEP Tests in the 13 Contracting Schools

June 1992 Results

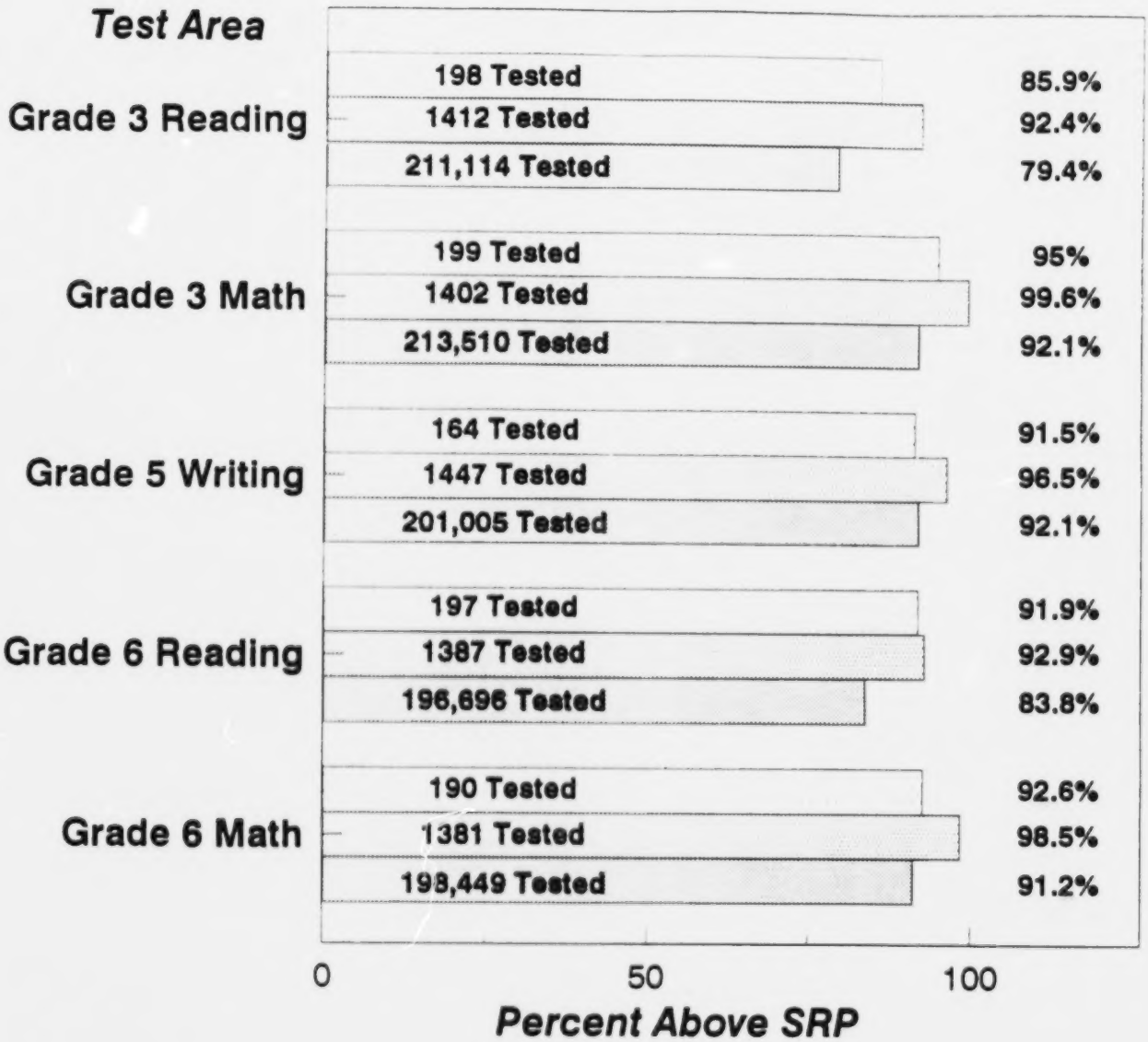
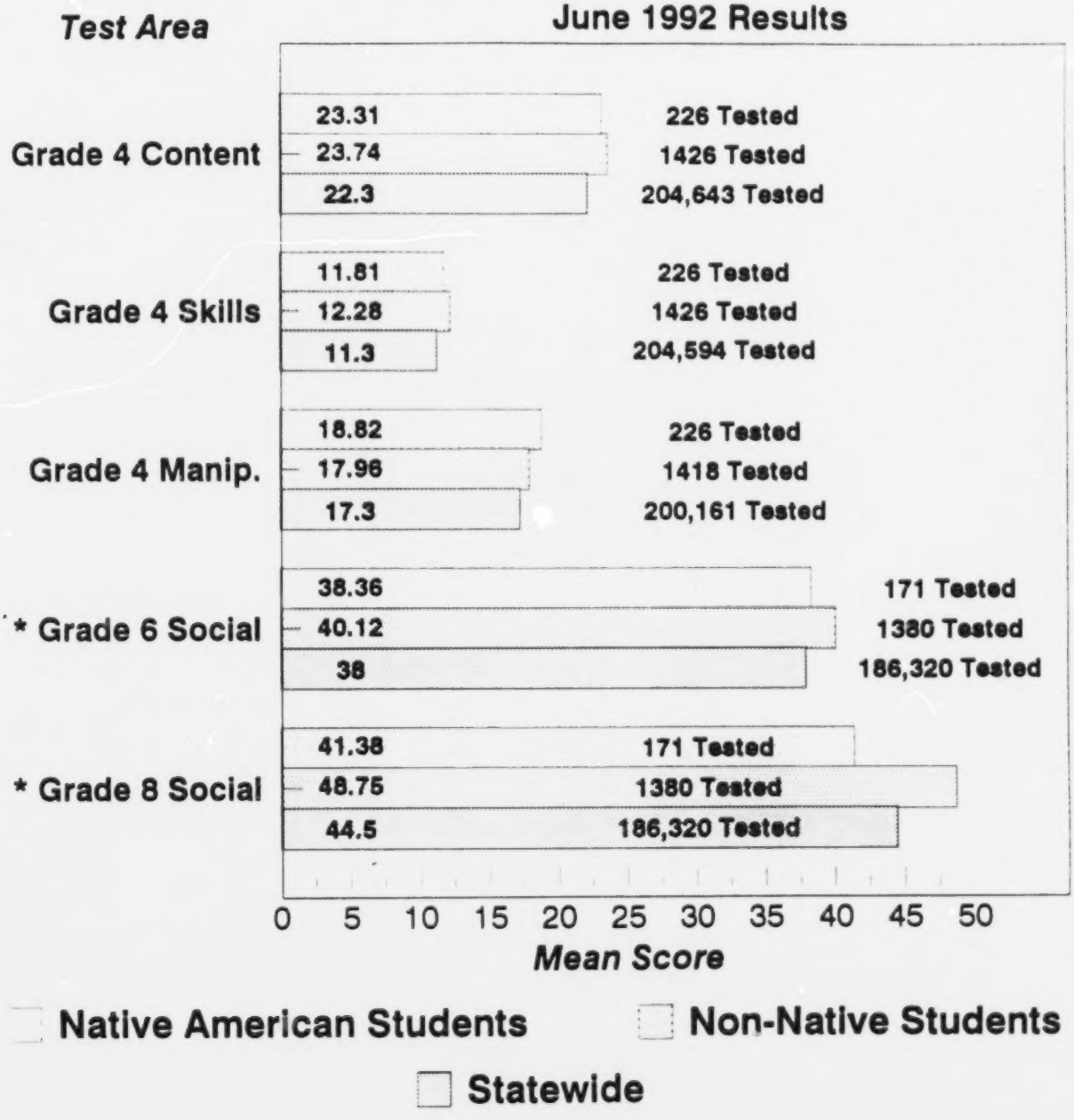


Chart II

PET Results Comparing Native Students With Non-Native Students In The 13 Contracting Schools



* objective and writing combined

Chart III

Percent of Students Scoring Above The SRP On the Preliminary Competency Tests In the 13 Contracting Schools

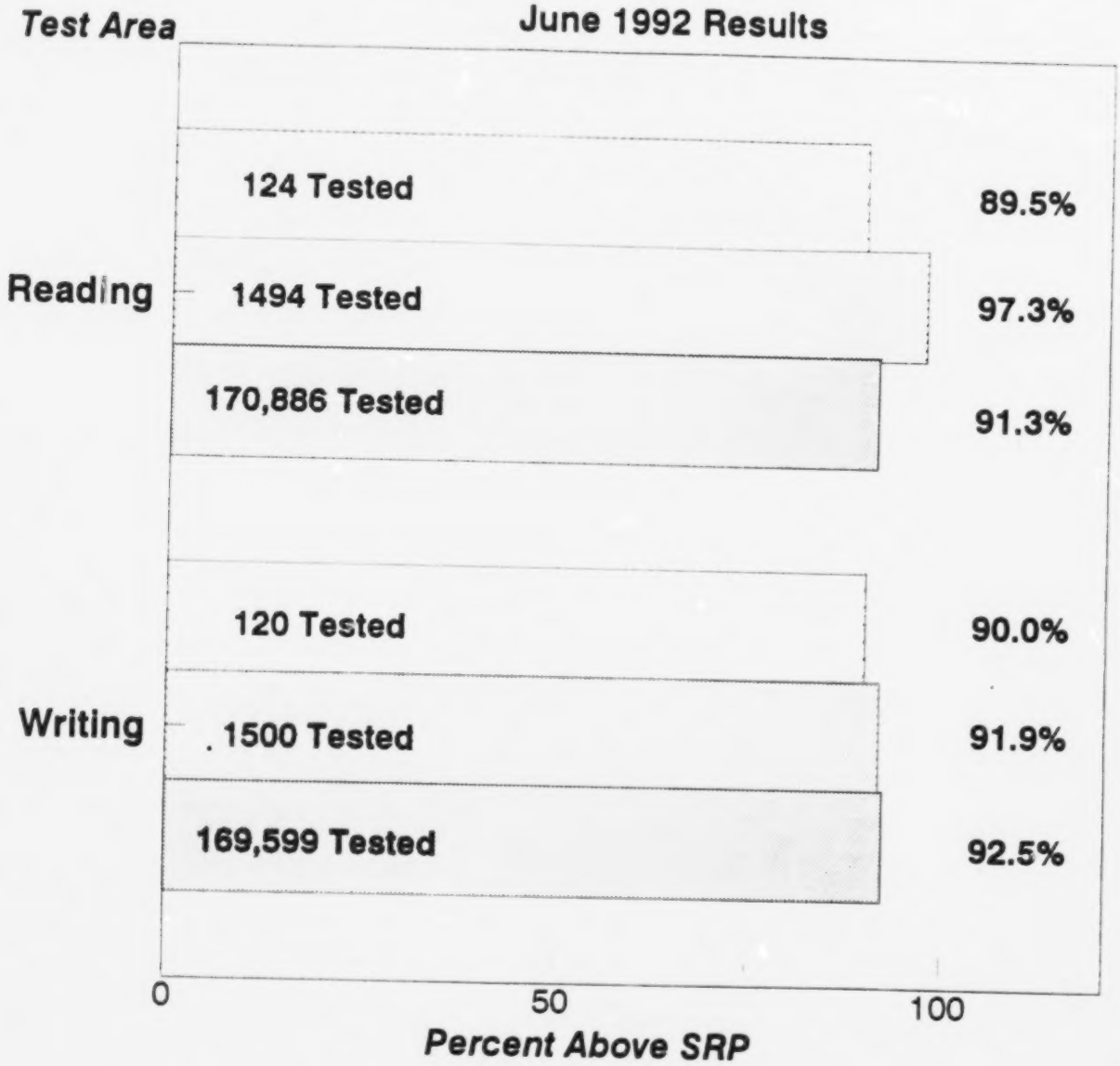


Chart IV

Regents Competency Tests Results Comparing Native Students and Non-Native Students In 13 Contracting Schools

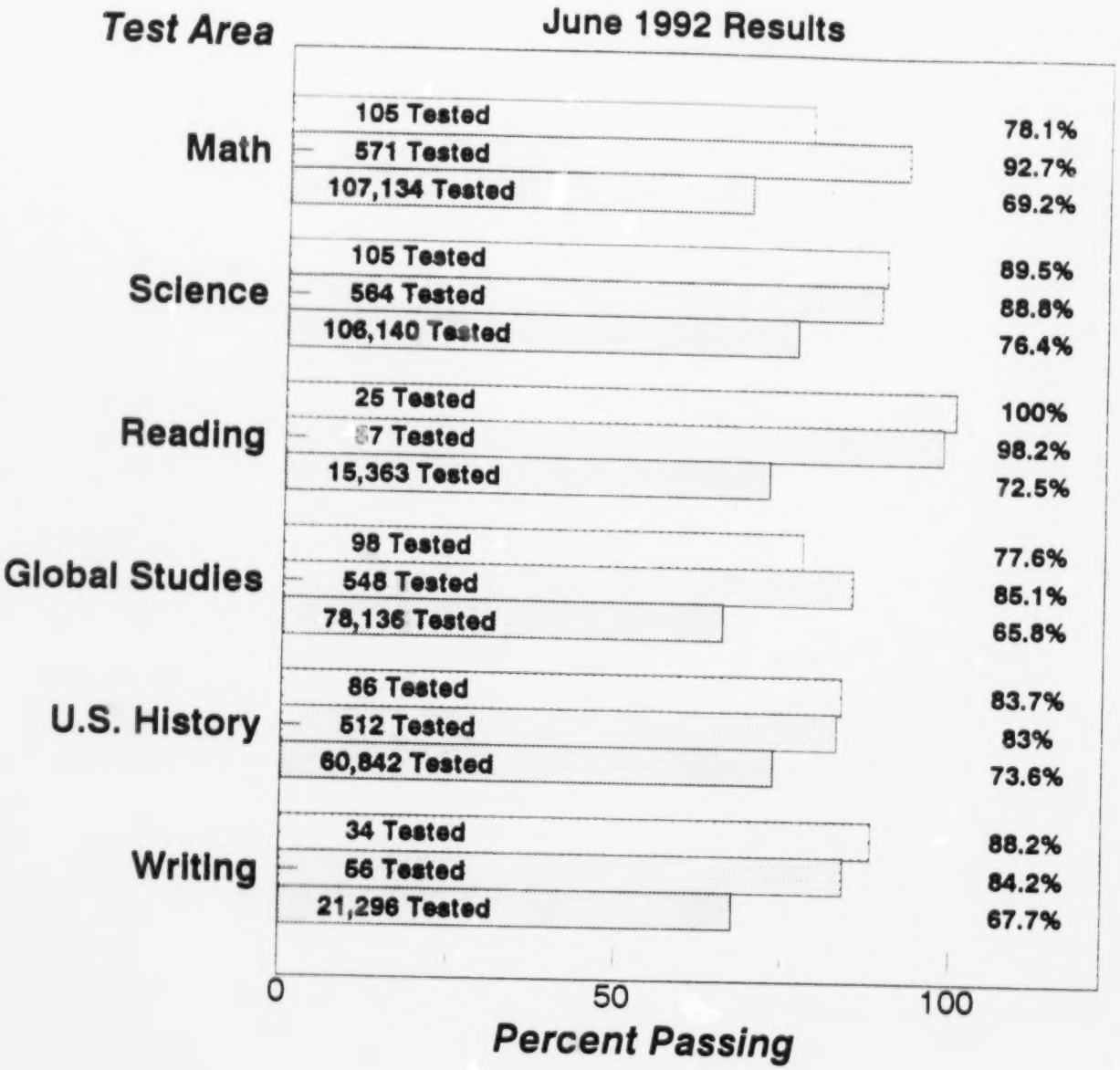


Chart V

1992 Regents Course Results Comparing Native Students With Non–Native Students in 13 Contracting Schools						
Subject Area	Native American Students		Non–Native Students		Statewide	
	# Tested	% Passed	# Tested	% Passed	# Tested	% Passed
Comp. Eng. III	64	85.9%	1,046	85.0%	95,084	86.7%
Global Studies	66	83.3%	993	82.2%	113,760	79.5%
US Hist. & Govt.	53	90.6%	936	88.8%	93,040	87.1%
Earth Science	77	80.5%	1,106	80.1%	83,218	81.1%
Biology	74	60.8%	868	77.0%	104,179	75.9%
Chemistry	39	82.1%	545	81.2%	71,994	76.8%
Physics	20	90.0%	353	83.4%	37,288	87.0%
Math Seq. I	117	59.8%	1,151	74.6%	127,378	73.7%
Math Seq. II	58	55.2%	841	78.3%	97,689	78.5%
Math Seq. III	44	93.2%	695	85.6%	70,254	85.9%
French	5	100.0%	286	93.4%	23,063	94.6%
Spanish	13	76.9%	383	89.0%	56,952	93.7%

Chart VI

Mean SAT Scores for Native American Students, In 13 Contracting Districts, New York State, and Nation

June 1992 Results

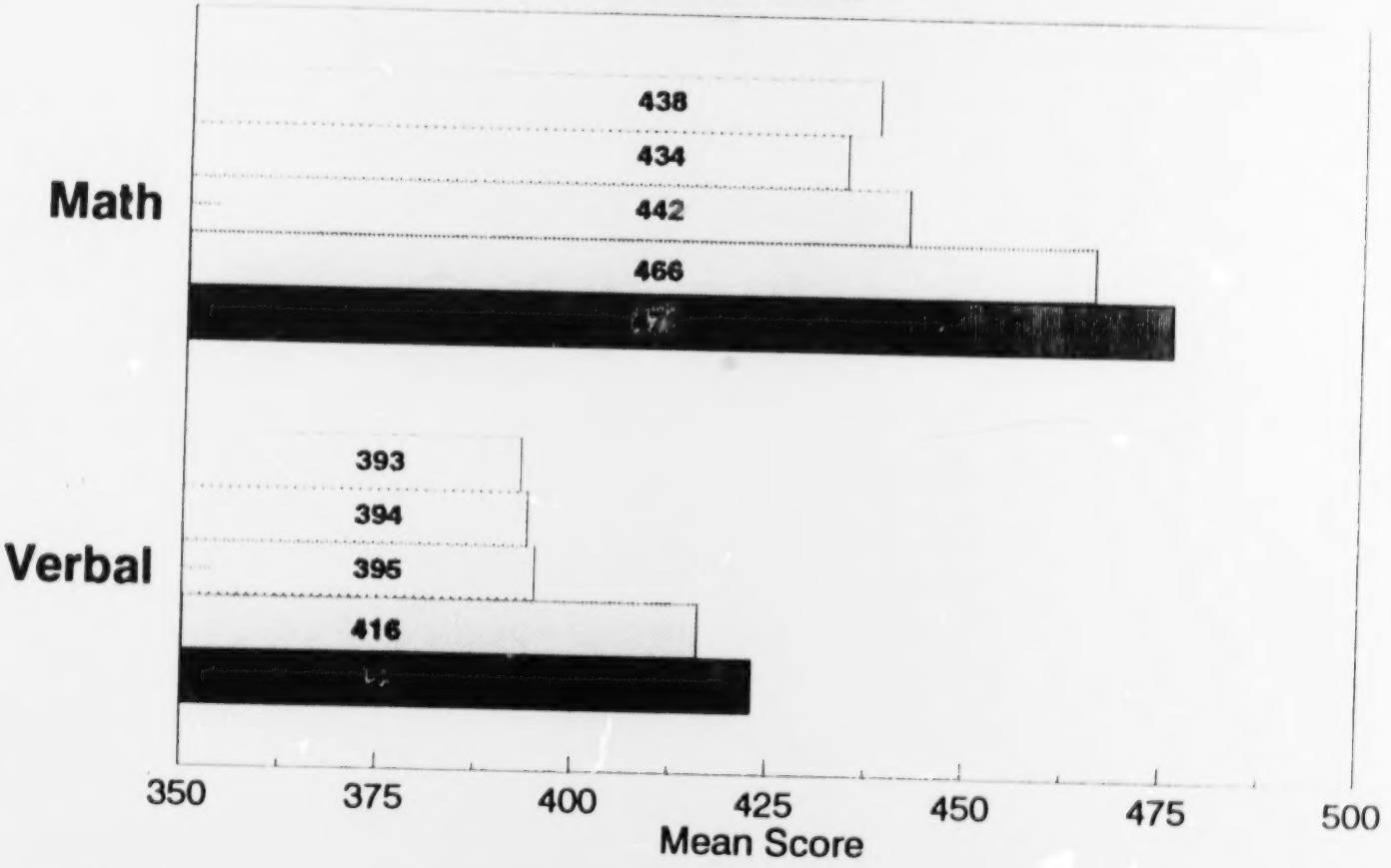


Chart VI-B

Mean SAT Scores for Various Minority Groups in New York State

June 1992 Results

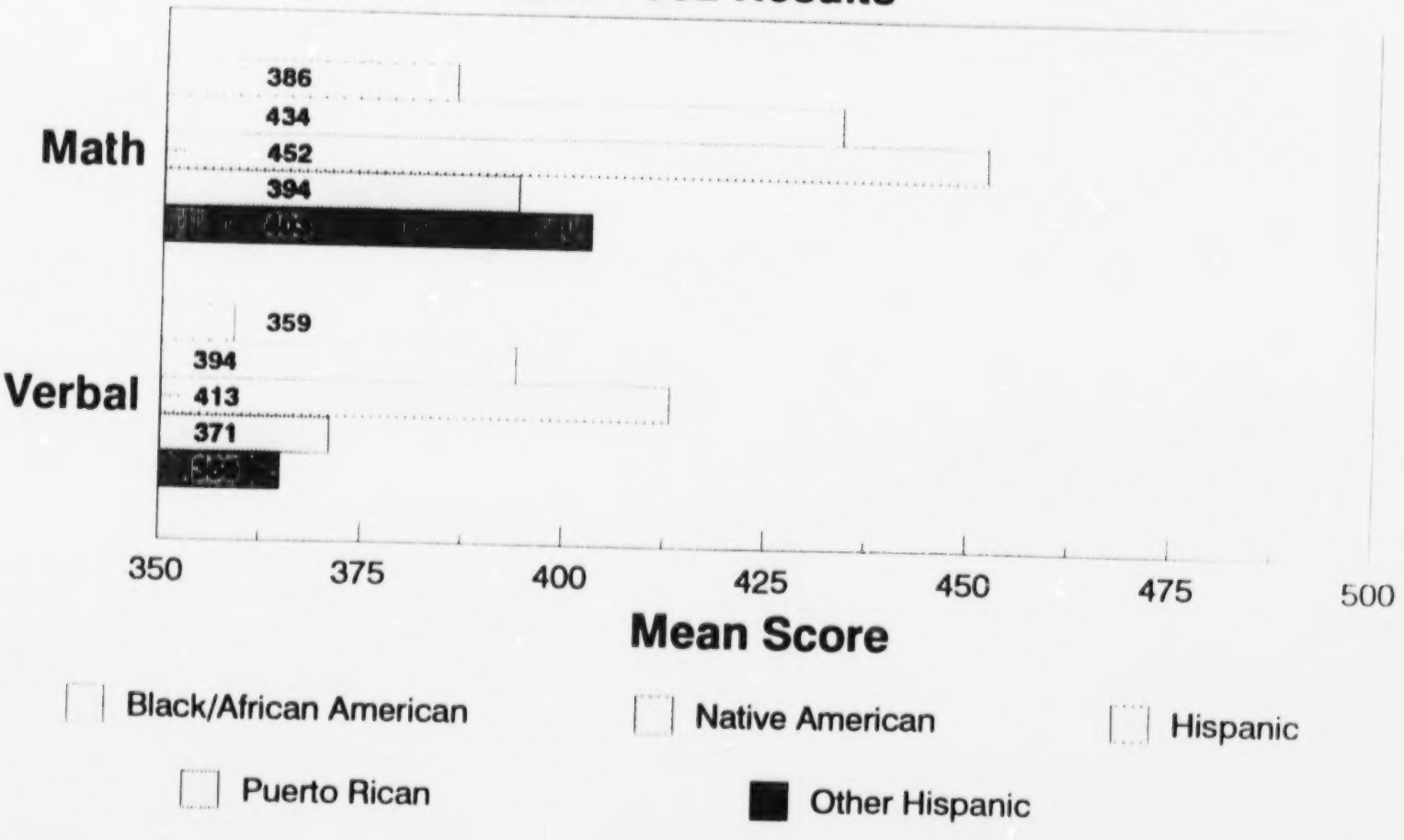


Chart VII

Percent of Students Scoring Above The SRP On PEP Tests in the Reservation Schools

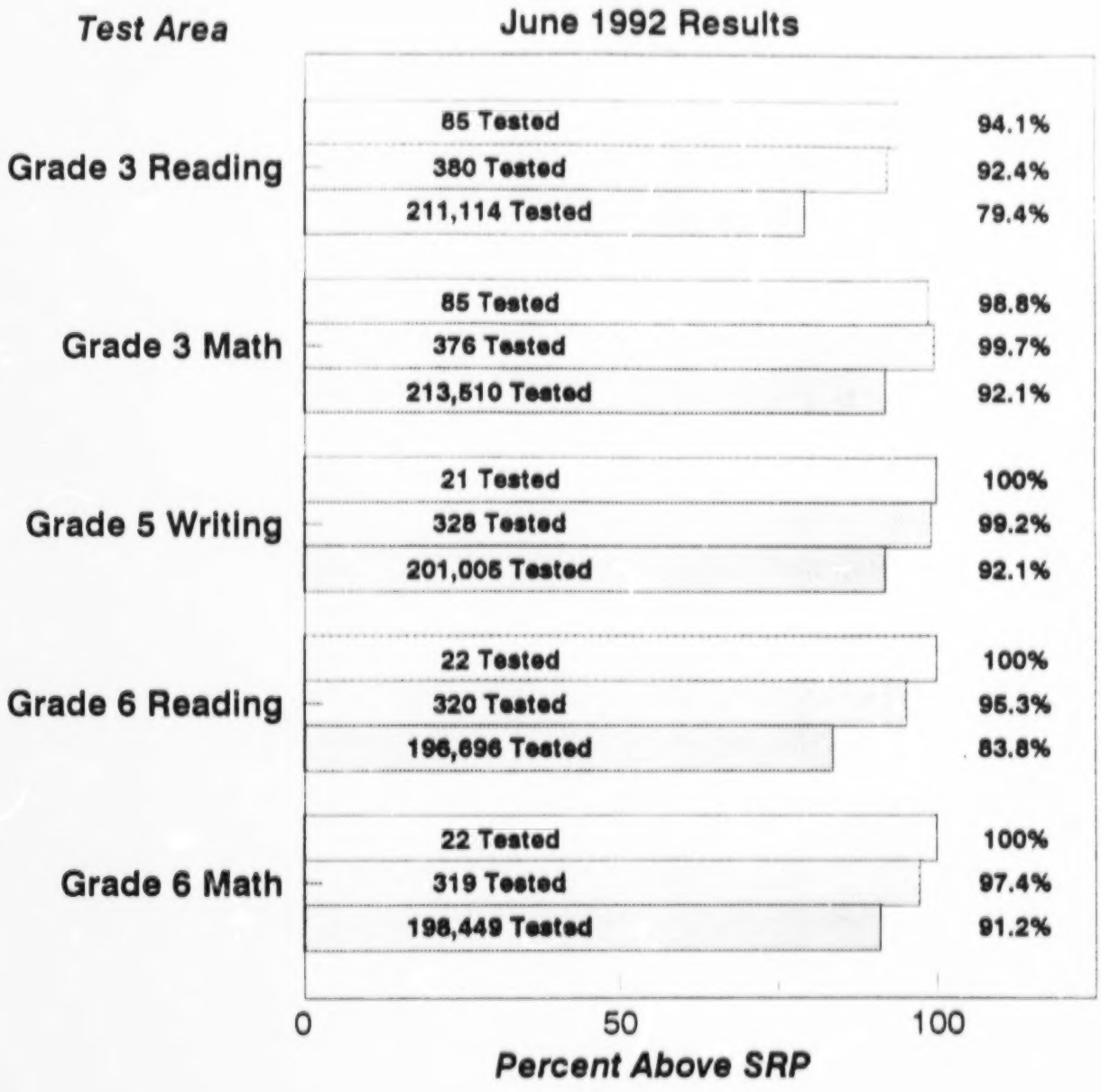
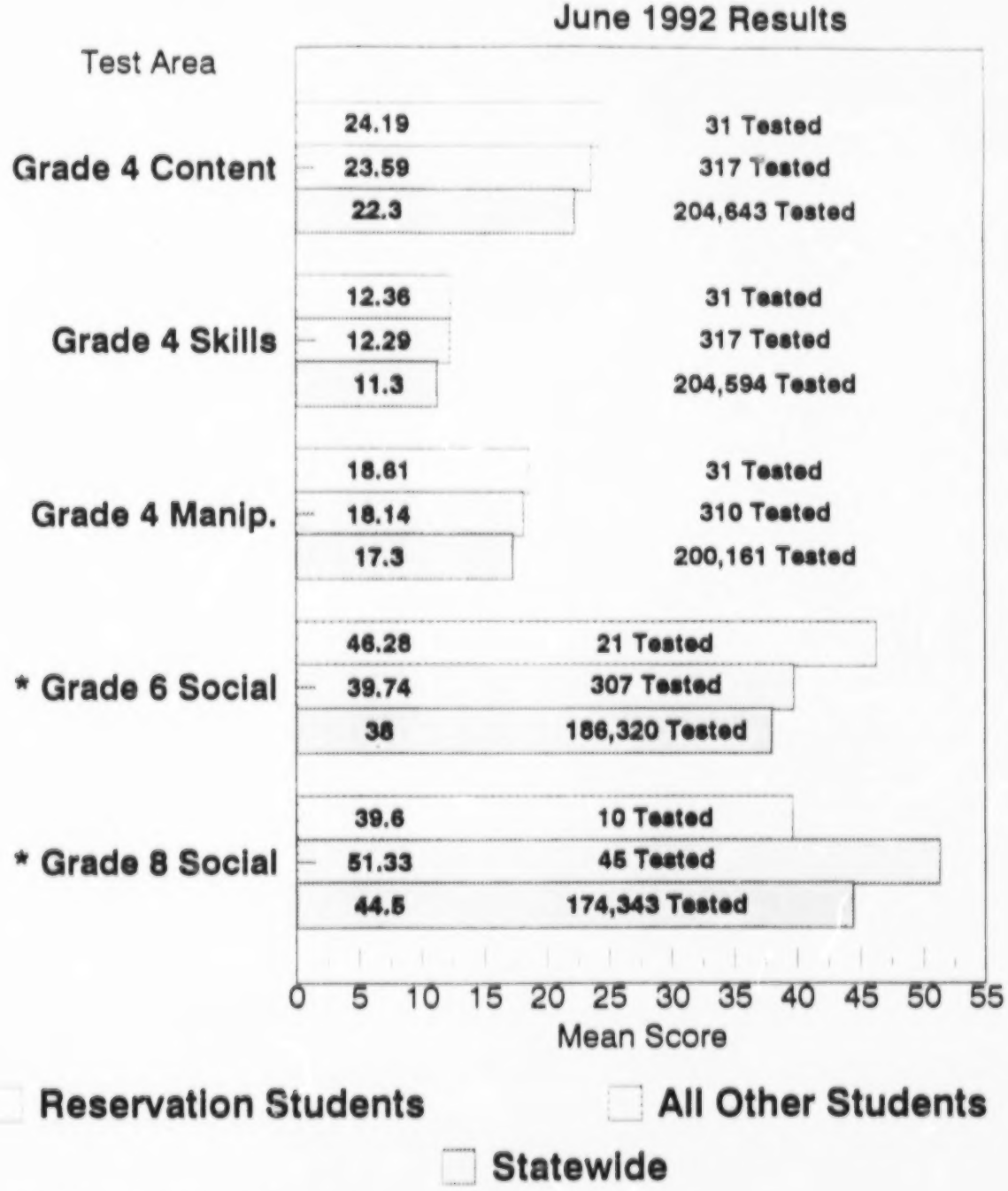


Chart VIII

PET Results Comparing Reservation School Students with All Other Students in Districts



* objective and writing combined

Summary of All Districts Combined – Absent Distribution by Percent

Absent Distribution	Total # Students	Days Absent									Total Listed
		0	1–5	6–10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26–35	36–45	45+	
K	230	13	33	49	39	29	17	18	2	0	200
1st	294	13	58	67	34	38	17	11	2	6	246
2nd	227	10	46	58	45	22	11	2	1	1	196
3rd	217	17	42	54	32	16	9	9	3	0	182
4th	243	19	40	46	38	33	11	10	2	1	200
5th	188	7	24	50	39	15	13	4	2	3	157
6th	204	15	30	36	39	23	11	12	5	1	172
7th	213	6	34	38	34	24	19	7	4	3	169
8th	189	2	28	29	26	20	10	11	8	7	141
9th	192	7	31	37	35	18	7	14	3	3	155
10th	169	3	24	21	30	13	17	18	2	6	134
11th	128	6	13	19	21	11	10	10	4	3	97
12th	135	2	18	21	15	12	7	17	7	8	107
Totals:	2629	120	421	525	427	274	159	143	45	42	2156

Absent Distribution	Total # Students	Days Absent									Total Listed
		0	1–5	6–10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26–35	36–45	45+	
K	230	6.50%	16.50%	24.50%	19.50%	14.50%	8.50%	9.00%	1.00%	0.00%	200
1st	294	5.28%	23.58%	27.24%	13.82%	15.45%	6.91%	4.47%	0.81%	2.44%	246
2nd	227	5.10%	23.47%	29.59%	22.96%	11.22%	5.61%	1.02%	0.51%	0.51%	196
3rd	217	9.34%	23.08%	29.67%	17.58%	8.79%	4.95%	4.95%	1.65%	0.00%	182
4th	243	9.50%	20.00%	23.00%	19.00%	16.50%	5.50%	5.00%	1.00%	0.50%	200
5th	188	4.46%	15.29%	31.85%	24.84%	9.55%	8.28%	2.55%	1.27%	1.91%	157
6th	204	8.72%	17.44%	20.93%	22.67%	13.37%	6.40%	6.98%	2.91%	0.58%	172
7th	213	3.55%	20.12%	22.49%	20.12%	14.20%	11.24%	4.14%	2.37%	1.78%	169
8th	189	1.42%	19.86%	20.57%	18.44%	14.18%	7.09%	7.80%	5.67%	4.96%	141
9th	192	4.52%	20.00%	23.87%	22.58%	11.61%	4.52%	9.03%	1.94%	1.94%	155
10th	169	2.24%	17.91%	15.67%	22.39%	9.70%	12.69%	13.43%	1.49%	4.48%	134
11th	128	6.19%	13.40%	19.59%	21.65%	11.34%	10.31%	10.31%	4.12%	3.09%	97
12th	135	1.87%	16.82%	19.63%	14.02%	11.21%	6.54%	15.89%	6.54%	7.48%	107
Totals:	2629	5.57%	19.53%	24.35%	19.81%	12.71%	7.37%	6.63%	2.09%	1.95%	2156

1991 – 92 Native American Student Attendance

Grade	Students	# Days	# Absent	# Tardy	Absent Rate	Tardy Rate
K	233	39962	3009	1598	7.53%	4.00%
1st	294	51908	3514	2103	6.77%	4.05%
2nd	227	40035	2261	1145	5.65%	2.86%
3rd	219	38900	2160	1128	5.55%	2.90%
4th	243	37341	2312	1251	6.19%	3.35%
5th	188	30173	2055	650	6.81%	2.15%
6th	204	36095	2491	966	6.90%	2.68%
7th	213	36836	2896	1477	7.86%	4.01%
8th	189	32541	3279	1493	10.08%	4.59%
9th	192	33633	2414	1386	7.18%	4.12%
10th	169	29267	2715	1871	9.28%	6.39%
11th	128	22301	1857	1672	8.33%	7.50%
12th	135	23835	2418	2149	10.14%	9.02%
Totals:	2634	452827	33379	18889	7.37%	4.17%

Overall ATTENDANCE Rate: 92.63%

Overall PUNCTUALITY Rate: 95.83%

1992 Student Achievement Data

Native Langugae Participation	Total # Students	Total # Enrolled	Total # Tested	Total # Passed
K	230	96	96	96
1st	294	111	110	110
2nd	227	74	73	73
3rd	217	63	63	63
4th	243	87	87	87
5th	188	72	72	72
6th	204	76	76	76
7th	213	71	71	64
8th	189	77	77	65
9th	192	68	68	59
10th	169	36	36	25
11th	128	15	15	15
12th	135	10	10	9
Totals:	2629	856	854	814

Schools Offering Native Language:

Salmon River Central School	K – 12
Gowanda Central School	7 – 12
Salamanca Central School	7 – 12
Tuscarora Indian School	K – 6
Lafayette Central School	K – 8
St. Regis Mohawk School	K – 3

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SUMMARY - Native American Affirmative Action Report
1991 - 92

Employment Category	# of N.A Employed in District (M)	(F)	# Years Experience in District (M)	(F)	Check if Yes Tenured	Promoted	Termination since September 1991 and list reasons	# of Job Openings	# of N.A. Applicants (M)	(F)	# of N. A. Hired (M)	(F)	Reasons for No N.A. hired in 1991 - 92
Supt./Assistant													
Principal	1		30		1			4					
Dir Pupil Personnel								1					
Teacher K 5	1	14	6	78	34			8		1		1	
Teacher 6-12	4	4	2	23	20			4					
Guidance Counslr.		2		5	1			1					
Schl. Phsych.													
Bus. Administ.													
Media Specialist													
Speech Therapist		1		1									
Social Worker		1		18		1							
Hme Sch Coordinat	1	5	17	55									
School Nurse		1		8				3		1			
School Doctor	1		4										
Librarian													
Attorney													
Teacher Aide/Asst		32	5	56				7		3			
Clerical/Secretary		13		119		1		19		3		2	
Bus Driver/Mechan	9	1	16	3				4					
Food Servce Wrkr	1	10	1	91				9					
Bldg & Grounds	1							1	2				
Custodial	11	10	50	52		1		10	5	9	1	2	
Other		1		18		1		1	1	3		1	
TOTALS:	30	95	131	527				72	8	20	1	6	